



## Office of the Vice President for Mission

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TO: The Gonzaga Community  
FROM: Frank E. Case, S.J. and Shanea Giroux  
SUBJ: Moment for Mission  
DATE: January 14, 2014

**Welcome Back, Everyone. It's nice to see life and activity on campus again. It was very quiet during the break.**

### **Personal Dignity**

A commitment to the dignity of the human person is a core concept in our Catholic, Jesuit, and humanistic mission here at Gonzaga. We're all pretty good, it seems to me, with this sort of respect for those far distant from us who are suffering in any way. It's not so easy, however, to maintain a calm and steady sense of respect for the dignity of others with whom we rub elbows every day. And, interestingly enough, we're not even very good at recognizing and affirming our own personal dignity. I suspect that others have experienced at times the same thing I have – of not feeling that I have much to offer that anyone would care about.

Many years ago, when I was studying theology in California, a professor pointed out that when the evangelist John says, “God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten son to be our Savior” (John 3:16), he was referring to more than the world in a merely global sense. God so loved each of us individuals that God sent the Son to be the savior of each of us. In other words, God, who knows us far better than we know ourselves, who knows us way down to the core of our individual beings, finds us loveable. Amazing! Someone who knows me totally, loves me because God sees that I am good. That is something to be shared. If I am loveable, I can love others without worry.

It seems to me that when we talk about educating students for lives of leadership and service for the common good, we speaking directly to this issue. If we are helping our students to see their own goodness and to receive and give love – as part of our education of the whole person – they will be able to engage more easily in roles of responsible service of the common good, whatever their chosen paths after they graduate – business, service industry, homemakers, government, religious life, volunteerism, or whatever. We have been entrusted with something very special in the women and men who come to Gonzaga for an education. This is a gift of love to us; let us give back to them of our love. Personal dignity can and does beget personal dignity in others!